

Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

VOLUME XXIV.

ASHLAND, O., WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18, 1902.

No. 25.

Editorial

A Good Place for a Boy

Yes, he is tied to his mother's apron strings. Well, sonny, you stay tied to your mother's apron strings just as long as God spares her to you. If the sneer tempts you to taste liquor, or smoke a cigarette, or use bad language, or keep swagger company, or do the many other thing supposed to be manly by the "punkin" heads found in every community, so much the worse for you, my boy. That mother's apron string,—the sweetest, holiest, safest place in the world, strongest cable to hold you back from sin. Many a time in the long journey before you, after that mother has been years and years in heaven, when you are bruised and weary and storm-tossed, you will long for the comfort and peace when you were tied to your mother's apron strings. It may be that your mother is a little old fashioned now since the years have multiplied, and perhaps wrinkles are beginning to form in her face, but it is well that you should remember how it all came about. Many a night's rest did she lose trying to soothe your temper and to ease your colic, and mayhap these years of patient toil and self denial have worn wrinkles on your dear mother's face and taken the freshness out of her eyes and the bloom from her cheeks. But it is still true that very close to that dear old lady is yet the safest and the sweetest place in all this world, and your life will be the better and the purer and the richer for having clung long and tight to the proverbial "apron string."

A Baptism of Fire

The judgments of the Lord are again abroad in the earth. "Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground." From earliest childhood we have read that thrilling story as one of the olden times miracles, and how startling therefore it is to witness a repetition of it in our own day. Behold the gay and beautiful city at the foot of the West Indian volcano. In a moment a mighty blast of tornadic fire bursts from the mountain side, and rains fire and brimstone from "the Lord out of heaven." The whole city is blown to pieces by the irresistible force of the blast. Mighty walls of basalt crumble like a house of cards. Instantaneous flames consume every building. The thousands of inhabitants meet swift death, and lie in heaps in the streets, while scarcely a Lot escapes to tell the awful story.

It is true the Bible account of the destruction of Sodom makes no mention of any volcanic agency, but the precise similarity of the two tremendous catastrophes suggests the idea that the agency employed was the same in both cases. Upon both cities sulphurous flames rained down from the sky. In both cases the surrounding country was also destroyed. Whether there was a moral similarity between the ancient and modern communities, we are not prepared to say. Perhaps St. Pierre was not as godly a city as it ought to have been. The destruction of Sodom was plainly a direct judgment of God on account of its astounding wickedness. We are not prepared to say whether such direct judgments are visited upon godless communities now-a-days. Instructed by the account of Sodom, the Jews were in the habit of interpreting every catastrophe as a direct judgment of God. "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Our Savior corrects this habit of thought, and teaches that a calamity falling upon any man or community was not to be taken as evidence of excessive wickedness above all others. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." "The Jews," says Dr. Lyman Abbott "treated disease as a sin, and it awakened their wrath; Jesus Christ regarded sin as a disease, and it inspired him with pity." We are told that St. Pierre was a very wicked city whose inhabitants had forgotten their God, to whom virtue had become a stranger, and that the volcanic eruption of Mt. Pelee was a direct visitation of judgment because of the ungodliness of the people. We are not prepared to accept such an interpretation of the very peculiar and mysterious behavior of Mt. Pelee on that fatal day. We incline to the opinion that this same Mount would have poured forth all the fire and brimstone and burning lava and hot steam and boiling mud even if the unhappy island had been happily uninhabited. We do not mean to say that the catastrophe does not carry with it both a lesson and a warning, but we do say that Mt. Pelee poured forth that awful destruction because the expulsive power of the pent up steam, burning gases and electricity was greater than the resistant power above it. This might have happened, and under similar conditions we believe would have happened if the inhabitants of St. Pierre had been saints, or if the island had been uninhabited.

When the people reminded Jesus of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices, Jesus answered and said unto them: "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell ye nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell